



Voice

February 2010

Volume 11 Number 4

A Shared Vision.....

Over the last several months there has been a great deal of discussion about the need to continue to strengthen the relationship between foster/adoptive families and the Department for Children and Families. This discussion has happened in many different forums.

In January, the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family Association sent a letter to the Department outlining suggestions for improving the partnership between the child welfare system and the foster and adoptive family association. The letter was a compilation of many foster and adoptive families' comments over the course of time. The letter addressed themes of improved collaboration and improving outcomes for families by addressing issues of communication, teamwork, shared decision making, training, and valuing foster and adoptive parents as partners in protection.

Simultaneously the Family Services Division leadership has been working on how to best partner with foster, adoptive and kinship families in their work. Many changes have occurred over the last two years, resulting from the division's transformation plan including a complete re-write of the state's juvenile code, and implementation of centralized intake and differential response. These had a dramatic impact not only on social workers, but on foster and adoptive parents as well.

We, the Commissioner for the Department for Children and Families and the President of the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family Association, agree that there is room for improvement in our collaboration. There is a strong commitment from both organizations to make sure this happens. In these tough economic times, collaboration – and good will – is more important than ever.

There are several key areas that have already begun to be addressed:

- * Each Director and Resource Coordinator will ensure that foster families are brought up to speed on new initiatives.
- * Directors and Resource Coordinators must work with local families to support the development of strong, healthy local associations. Resource Coordinators in particular will work with local foster parents to develop or strengthen local associations. When strong local associations provide significant support for foster and adoptive parents, they also provide valuable feedback from foster and adoptive families to the department.
- * Together, we will produce a brochure for wide distribution outlining roles and responsibilities of foster parents and of the division. Too often we hear that foster parents and social workers are simply not clear on these matters.

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- * We will develop a mechanism for foster and adoptive families to ensure that they have an avenue to give feedback to DCF. This will likely be through a link on the website. We will send out more information to you as this is developed.
- * Finally, the department is developing a proposal for an enhanced method of seeking formal review of case decisions. Although legal authority rests with the Commissioner, it is critical that foster families have an avenue for their voices to be heard. Ideally, local discussions and team meetings can resolve most issues. But when a foster parent feels passionately that a bad thing is happening for an individual child, that voice must be heard.

While there is much work to be done, we are heartened by the incredible determination and motivation to move the collaboration forward. The bond that ties us together is our shared vision of ensuring that every child has a safe and healthy family that nurtures them to grow into healthy, happy and productive citizens. It is this vision and common ground that we will use to guide us through the changes that will come and the work plan that we will develop together. Please look for opportunities to join your local and state associations in moving this work toward increased collaboration.

With Hope and Determination,
Steve Dale and Kim Coe

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**VFAFA meets the
second Tuesday of the
month at 7:00 at Gifford
Hospital in Randolph
except in December. All
are welcome to attend.**

Foster Parent Recognition

We would like to acknowledge foster parents in each edition of the VFAFA Voice. We welcome stories/letters from around the state, and encourage districts to send stories or testimonials about foster parents in their district. We recognize that all foster parents across the state are providing extraordinary service to children in need. We celebrate all foster parents across Vermont.

This month we recognize three foster families.

1. **Doug and Mary Adams:** They have become foster parents to support the growth and development of a very complicated and strong willed foster youth. Over the years, he has “burned out” countless foster families, alternative school programs, and even residential facilities. They heard about this boy at a church meeting, and stepped forward, opening their home and hearts to him. Doug and Mary have displayed tremendous patience and kindness in providing a home for this youth, and they do so out of pure and true love for who he is and the strengths and gifts that he possesses. Their steadfast belief in him has made a difference in his life.
2. **Steven and Deborah West:** Steve and Debby have touched the lives of approximately 300 children in the past eleven years. Their specialty area is working with teen boys. The boys respond to the clear boundaries, and many of them continue to have a relationship long after they have moved on. One young man called Deb recently and spoke to her for a long time. He had spent a Thanksgiving with Deb’s family some time ago, and always thinks of her on that holiday. In Deb’s words, “They don’t forget”.
3. Shout Out! To **Michelle and Brien Martin**, foster parents in St. Albans. They have been tenacious and successful in navigating some complicated educational needs and services for a teen boy in their home, all the while supporting the child and his parents during a difficult time with the serious illness of the child’s beloved grandfather. The grandfather passed away Christmas morning. Michelle and Brien provided comfort and care for this child and his family that has been nothing short of selfless and inspiring.

Goings on Around the State



St. Albans: In March, St. Albans is planning to offer foster parents the opportunity to meet with our new director, Karen Shea. We will hold a forum to provide information, updating them on all of the changes that have happened over the past year or so at Family Services. Some of the agenda items include: Centralized Intake, Differential Response, Case Opening Criteria, Juvenile Proceedings Act, Family Time Coaching, Family Safety Planning, and Shared Parenting Meetings.

The St. Albans holiday project, a combined effort with the NW Foster Parent Association, the community, and our local DCF office, provided gifts to nearly 300 children this year. Special recognition to foster parents Karen and Cy Gagne and Carol and Neil Fay for their fundraising efforts and personal donations, and to social worker Kathy Francis who organizes and coordinates the project.

Springfield: The Springfield Foster/Adoptive Family Association had a very successful 12th annual “Christmas is for Kids” party, with almost 100 attending. We are so grateful to our friends in the community for their generous and heartfelt contributions. The party provided a great Christmas for all the children and families, and a lot of smiles and giggles. Our association meetings have been well attended and we have a great training at each. The next training will be with the HCRS program, the Child and Family Support Program.

Middlebury: We are developing training for foster parents relative to the shared parenting meetings that most foster parents will be required to attend. The training will focus on the philosophy of the shared parenting meeting and the skills and language that foster parents need to have in order to be a productive member of the team.

Burlington: The Burlington Foster/Adoptive Family Association has published the second volume of a cookbook. It is filled with great recipes, and is for sale for \$5.00. If you are interested in purchasing a cookbook, please contact Mary Buffum at mary.buffum@ahs.state.vt.us . The profits from the cookbook will be donated to the Lund Family Center Play Lab.

There are monthly meetings, which are pot luck, and often include training. Last month we had a training on internet safety. Burlington now uses an e-mail distribution list for communication, and foster parents may access this to request clothing, furniture, and other needs such as a dentist for a child, or a particular service. We have found this to be a very successful way to communicate, and to keep foster parents up to date with what’s going on.

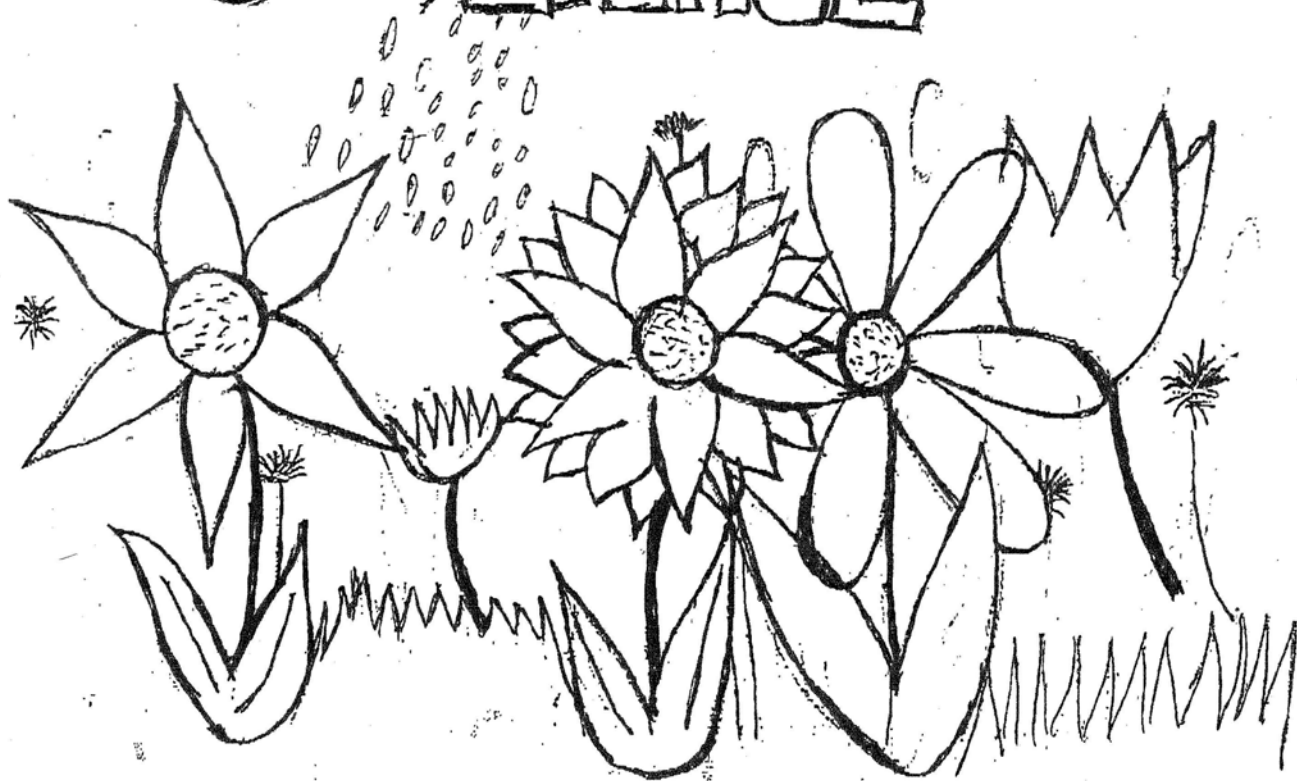
Morrisville: The Morrisville Foster Parent Association has begun to use a teleconference option to build our group, and make it easier for foster parents to attend. We had our first and very successful teleconference meeting on January 21. Participants just call a toll free number, and then we all meet from the comfort of our homes. If people are interested in participating in these meetings, please contact Bambi 635-7566 or bh122400@comcast.net or Amy at 888-1375 or amy.anderson@ahs.state.vt.us . We are looking at fund raising ideas. We’d love to hear from you about your ideas. We plan to have a foster parent/kid fun day in the next month or two. Stay tuned.

Bennington: Foster parents in Bennington have been very busy transporting little ones to family time visits. The foster parents have had a chance to meet and talk with families, and are developing relationships that make a difference in the lives of children. Hats off to all foster parents who have the compassion to take the time to stop and listen.

Hartford: Hartford held its annual Foster Family Christmas Party on December 11th. Everyone enjoyed receiving gifts from Santa, decorating cookies and making crafts. We are now planning for foster parent month and a celebration of foster parents, with one of the events being a dinner at the conclusion of foster parent training.

St. Johnsbury: 2009 ended with our very successful holiday celebration. Our winter Foundation Training began last week with an enthusiastic group, all looking for different kinds of experiences from emergency care to adoption. Katherine Boise and folks from Youth Services will present Youth Development – Challenges and Supports, at our monthly local association next week.

23rd Annual VFAPA Conference



The schedule

Friday April 23

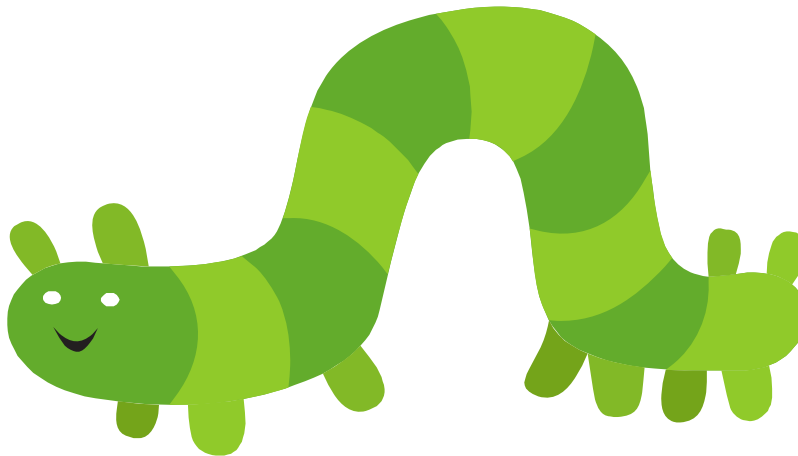
9:00-9:30	Registration
9:30-4:00	Institute, Ross Greene
4:30-7:00	Registration Open

Saturday April 24

8:30-9:00	Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:45-9:15	Welcome and VFAFA Business Meeting
9:15-10:15	Keynote Michael Trout
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-12:00	Session One
12:00-1:15	Lunch on your own
1:30-3:00	Session Two
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-4:00	Open Forum
6:00-6:30	Social Time
6:30-8:30	Banquet

Sunday April 25

7:30-9:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:00	Closing



VFAFA Conference Information

REGISTRATION

The 23rd annual VFAFA Spring Conference will be held at the Sheraton Conference Center in Burlington on April 23-25, 2010. Registration for the conference will be completely on line this year. To register, please go to the VFAFA.org web site, and click on the link to register for Spring Conference. At the end of the registration form, you will find a link to the Sheraton Conference Center. You may either make your lodging reservation on-line, or if you would rather, you may call the Sheraton directly and make your room reservation. If you call, please let them know that you are making a reservation for the VFAFA conference. You will secure your reservation with a credit/debit card, which will not be charged, only held. The foster parent scholarship to the conference includes rooms, with double occupancy. If you would like a single room, you may request that, and your credit card will be charged \$55 per night.

It is also important to know that if you are a DCF foster/adoptive family, you will pay your VFAFA membership dues at the time that you register for the conference. This will save a great deal of time and effort after the conference. Your registration will not be confirmed, until receipt of your membership dues.

If you are uncomfortable using the computer, please contact your resource coordinator. There will be one or two people in each district who will be available to help you register.

Speakers for the Conference

Friday April 23 Institute, Ross Greene Collaborative Problem Solving: Teaching, Parenting, and Treating Challenging Kids

Ross Greene (Ross Greene PhD) is the originator of the Collaborative Problem Solving approach and specializes in the assessment and treatment of kids with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. He is the author of The Explosive Child, co author of Treating Explosive Kids, the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach, and the author of the recently released Lost at School. Dr. Greene is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

Saturday April 24 Key Note Michael Trout, The Narrative of the Infant: Understanding and Repairing the Earliest Stories We Tell Ourselves

Michael Trout is the director of the Infant-Parent Institute, which engages in research, clinical practice and clinical training related to problems of attachment. In addition to publishing a number of book chapters and journal articles, Mr. Trout has produced 14 clinical training videos that are used by universities and clinics around the world. Mr. Trout is the author of The Jonathon Letters (written for foster and adoptive parents) and The Hope-Filled Parent (a meditation CD for foster and adoptive parents).

Sunday April 25 Closing Speaker, Steve Lulek. Follow Your Dream-Find Your Purpose
Steve Lulek is the owner and founder of Vermont Adventure Tours. His passion is outdoor adventures and fitness, and he has dedicated his life to introducing adolescents and adults to the joys of being in the wilderness.

Workshops

GLBT Foster Parenting and Adoption, a dialogue, Lisa Steckler

Foster parenting or adopting as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered person or couple offers gifts and challenges that are not always discussed in the mainstream foster parent training, support groups, or general association meetings. How does our orientation affect our children? How do we navigate a system that doesn't always understand or make room for differences? How can your experiences help others? Bring your joys, challenges and hopes and join us in honoring what we bring to the table.

The Dream of going to College today is STILL possible, Joe Heyer

Foster youth require special encouragement to realize their potential and their dreams. Education is essential. Foster and adoptive parents have a special opportunity to encourage and support their progress. You can make the difference. Come and learn about the knowledge and resources you have to give real encouragement to youth.

The Vermont Adoption Registry, Adoption Law, and Post-Adoption, Christine Shuma

Overview of the Vermont Adoption Registry, and its functions: the Adoption Law and how it pertains to records, and an open discussion about Post-Adoption contact with birth family members.

Family Time Coaching: Understanding the model and knowing my role as a Kin/Foster/Adoptive Caregiver, Cheryle Bilodeau and Suzanne Legare Belcher

Family time Coaching is a model being used by Family Services to support parents during their time with their children when their children are not living with them. Come learn how this looks different from supervised visits and what your role as a foster, adoptive and kin caregiver looks like.

Neuropsychological effects of Trauma on children, Tracy Richards

This presentation explains the basics of trauma, its neurological effect on the developing brain of a child and how it can be behind some of the developmental challenges they face. We will go over how it impacts attachment, behavioral and emotional regulation, as well as cognition. Participants will also learn strategies that primary caregivers can use to help a child make sense of past events and begin to help repair the developmental impact of early trauma.

Beyond Consequences, logic and control, Laurie Rapp. If you're dealing with a child who is angry, oppositional, lying, stealing, or hoarding, learn about hope for you. Move through fear and bring love into the darkness of our children's world. Be introduced to a ground-breaking parenting approach that has helped in the most difficult situations. This technique has helped families find healing after years of "trying everything and nothing worked".

Peaceful Solutions: Guiding Children to a Non-Violent Future, Sandy Hart

Various dynamics of helping children (between five and ten years old*) understand anger and deal with conflict are covered. Information on talking with children include: defining anger and conflict, what anger looks and feels like, calming techniques and methods for resolving conflict peacefully. This workshop offers numerous tools to help young children find peaceful solutions when they experience anger or conflict.

*The information given is intended to be used with young children but can be enhanced to be used with older youth.

Creating Resiliency through Childhood Exploration, Sharon O'Neill and Deidra Razzaque

Participants will reflect on the wonders of childhood and the activities that promote it, such as art, make-believe, cooperative games and gardening. You will leave this hands-on workshop with creative ideas and resources that will encourage wonder and resilience in the children in your lives.

What is Vermont Doing about Child Sexual Abuse? What is your Role, Karen Crowley and Jim Forbes

S.13-An Act Relating to Improving Vermont's Sexual Abuse Response System was passed during the legislative session in 2009. The new law has multiple components and impacts virtually everyone that works with children and youth. This workshop will describe the scope of the planned implementation and discuss the expected outcomes and impacts.

Claiming and Healing- Adopting the Older Child through Foster Care, Sarah Rosenthal

This workshop will examine the challenges related to moving older children from their foster placements into their permanent homes. We will look at various tools and strategies that can lead to a successful transition

along with the ways parents can help their newly placed children adjust to their new home and jumpstart the process of becoming a family. We will share success stories of children and teens placed in permanent families and the strategies that led to their success.

Technicool: A Technology Safety Program, Kathy Dretz and Erin McKenney

Participants will learn about the newest technology related activities and how kids and teens are using them. Stories about the dangers of these technologies have dominated headlines in recent years. Through presentations, case studies and activities, this workshop will help participants to separate myth from reality and suggests simple steps to minimize risks.

Panel Discussion: Preparing for Court: Foster Parents and Children Court Hearings can be fast paced and confusing. Learn tips for mentally and emotionally preparing yourself and the child in your care to participate in these hearings. Find out which types of hearings the judge will expect you or the child to participate, and what kinds of issues the court will address at those hearings. The panel will include family court judges, DCF staff, a foster parent, and a youth.

Reactive Attachment Disorder: One Response to Early Loss, Separation and Trauma, Michael Trout

What happens in the minds of infants, toddlers and preschoolers when someone they love disappears, either temporarily or permanently? This workshop will consider some of the scientific advances that have helped us see more clearly that the results of early loss, trauma, and separation are not merely emotional, but are anatomical, adaptive, and persistent. We will then zero in on one particular response to early loss, often seen when trauma is also a factor: Reactive attachment Disorder of Infancy or Early Childhood. This focus will allow us to consider the adaptive elements of RAD, and to consider the counterintuitive management strategies that work best with these children.

The Impact of Domestic Violence on Prenates, Infants and Young Children, Michael Trout

When, and how, does domestic violence enter the perceptual field of young children, including infants not yet born? How can we track the neurological changes that occur when danger is perceived, and there is no defense? How do such neurological changes show up later, in behavior, and in the child's internal working model? This workshop will consider what the literature in trauma and in developmental neurobiology teaches us about what organism's do when survival appears to be at stake, and why reactivity, hyper vigilance, and apparent difficulty in focusing should be understood as natural adaptive responses to early exposure to violence.



Children's Activity Fund

VERMONT FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY ASSOCIATION Children's Activity Fund Request Form

VFAFA has limited amount of money available to supplement the cost of enrichment activities for children in foster care. Funding is on a first-come, first-served basis and must be used for children currently living in the foster home. Requests should be for enrichment activities and NOT for treatment or remedial education programs. The amount of funding may vary based on the request, but it will not be more than \$100.00. Children and youth are encouraged to contribute to the cost as appropriate. Checks will be made out directly to the organization or to the foster parent if a receipt is provided.

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____

Foster Parents: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Activity/camp: _____ Dates: _____

Total Cost: _____ Amount requested: _____

Other funding sources and amounts received (include child/family contributions):

Briefly describe what the activity is and how the child will benefit from this experience – use back of sheet if necessary:

Person or organization to whom payment is to be made: _____

Return to: Jane Siddall, 49 Fairground Road, Springfield, VT 05156

Get Connected through the Listserv

Site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vtresourcefamilies/>

Membership – Vermont resource families and others who support them. This group is not listed publicly; however, anyone may join by visiting the website. The listserv is a forum for information sharing and support.

Creating A Profile – If you are receiving e-mails from this group, you have been added as a member to the listserv. If not, go to the website to join. Creating a profile will allow you to access other features on the website, change your settings, participate in “chats” and post materials.

To create a profile:

- ◆ Go to website
- ◆ Click on sign-in
- ◆ If you do not have a yahoo username and password you will be asked to create one. You can use the e-mail features without creating a profile but won't be able to access the website without creating one.

Receiving E-mails – You may choose to receive e-mails in a number of ways:

Individual – all e-mails are sent as they are received

Digest – all e-mails for the day are sent in one e-mail. Many people prefer this because it cuts down on the number of e-mails they receive. If you choose this option, attachments are not included. The e-mail will tell you there were attachments. You must visit the website to get the attachments.

Announcements – receive only e-mails sent by the listserv manager marked as special announcements. This feature is not used often.

You can change your preference at any time by visiting the website and indicating your preference.

Sending E-mails – Currently the listserv is monitored, which means that messages are approved before they go to the listserv.

Replying to e-mails – If you hit reply, your response goes to everyone on the list. Be careful what you say. If you want to respond to the individual who sent the e-mail, copy the e-mail address into the “To” box. This is the most common mistake people make and one of the reasons why the list is monitored.

Sending e-mails – You may send a message from the website or by using the following address:

VT Resource Families: vtresourcefamilies@yahoogroups.com

Other Features – On the website there are a number of additional features. You must create a profile and sign-in to the site to be able to access them.

Files – Click on folders to see the files inside. Click on the pad to open the document. You can find things like the scholarship application and VFAFA by-laws here. You may post files or send them to drobie@shoreham.net.

Chats – On-line discussions in real time can occur with others who are signed in to the website. There is the possibility of setting specific times to have focused or informal discussions. If you are interested, send an e-mail to the listserv and see what the response is.

Or you can skip all this and send your e-mail address to Diane Robie, drobie@shoreham.net and ask her to add you to the listserv.

Local Association Meetings

Barre

Feb., April, Sept., Nov.
3rd Wed of the month
6:00 PM
Nancy Benoit at 476-6734

Bennington

Second Thursday of the month
11AM-1PM
at the DCF Conference Room
For information, please call Val Miner
at 447-2744

Burlington

3rd Wed. of the month
6-8PM
At the District Offices
For information contact Mary Buffum
951-0020 or mary.buffum@ahs.state.vt.us

Middlebury

Danielle Thompson
A115_thompson@myfairpoint.net

Morrisville

3rd Thursday of the month
6PM
At the Congregational Church in Morrisville
for information, contact Bambi Hoadley—
dhoadley@comcast.net

Rutland

last Monday of the month
7pm
At Denny's Rt. 7
for information contact Lisa Steckler at
alex05738@aol.com

Springfield

3rd Thursday of the month
for information, contact Jane Sidall at
jane.siddall@ahs.state.vt.us

St. Albans

last Wednesday of the month
for information contact Carol Fay at 893-6683

St. Johnsbury

Last Wed of the month
6-8PM
At the Parent Child Center 115 Lincoln St. St.
Johnsbury
for more information contact Bob Ranahan at 748-6677

DCF FAMILY SERVICES PARTNERS WITH VSAC TO MAKE COLLEGE POSSIBLE FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

Vermont's state child protection agency, DCF Family Services has teamed up with the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) to provide funding and other forms of support for youth leaving foster care who aspire to attend college.

VSAC administers state and federal funds specifically targeted at former foster youth along with other traditional forms of financial aid to help these youth afford to go on to college after high school.

Every year in Vermont, approximately 115 foster youth turn 18 and leave the foster care system. During the 2008-2009 college school year 92 former foster youth ages 18-22 received financial support for college from this partnership. This number is nearly double the previous year and four times the number participating prior to this partnership.

This is a laudable accomplishment. For the youth involved it represents a personal triumph over considerable odds. DCF and VSAC are committed to continued financial support to these youth. To truly support former foster youth in accessing the same kinds of opportunities other youth have for attending college, there are two other critical kinds of support that DCF and VSAC are working together to provide.

In order for a young person to successfully complete high school, be admitted to college, and succeed there, they must be exposed to the career and life opportunities afforded by a college education, be supported to succeed in high school, encouraged to aspire to post-secondary education, and continue to receive the emotional support during college to meet the social and academic challenges they will face there. VSAC provides these supports through their outreach programs. At this time, 148 current and former foster youth are receiving these services.

As anyone who has parented a child through this daunting process knows, it is not easy for those whose experience as a child was safe and stable. For foster youth who have experienced trauma and instability, it is much more difficult. In the United States and here in Vermont, foster youth have significantly lower rates of high school completion, college admission and college graduation than the general population. DCF and VSAC are engaged in a coordinated effort to address these realities.

In June, 2007, Governor Douglas signed the Youth in Transition Act which provides DCF with financial resources allowing youth to continue receiving support until their 22nd birthday for those completing high school, attending college, and/or entering the workforce. Supports can include: funding to remain connected to foster parents who support them, housing funds to get their own apartment, and the guidance of a caseworker to help them find their way into the adult world. At this time, there are approximately 100 former foster youth partaking of the housing and extended care options and several hundred more receiving caseworker support.

The VSAC/DCF partnership is targeting its efforts to increase recruitment and retention of youth to post secondary education by prioritizing foster youth referrals to Trio programs conducted by VSAC for youth in junior high school. Trio programs offer important career exploration, skills development, and exposure to college settings designed to increase the number of at-risk youth aspiring to careers and college. The Trio program continues to track and support youth who

participate in the program during their high school years in order to help link their career aspirations to their high school course choices and achievement. DCF will coordinate their efforts at supporting education for foster youth with this effort to achieve higher rates of academic success for foster youth leading to higher rates of high school graduation, college admission and completion.

This is not and will not be an easy task. It is our responsibility as a government to support those individuals who need that support the most and as a society to create equal opportunities for those who aspire to them. As anyone who has spent any time with these youth will tell you, they have so much to contribute. We need to give them that chance.



PINS UPDATE

Partners in Service (PINS), continues to support children and youth who are involved with Family Services. High school seniors often incur additional expenses that pertain to their last year in high school – yearbooks, the occasional prom (!), and cap and gown rental. At times, youth are living on their own already, or they are in a foster home that cannot afford those senior class extras. PINS partner congregations around the state have been learning to ask about their Agency partner's caseload, to determine if they can help with those expenses.

In addition, two special diploma programs, YouthBuild through ReSource, Inc., in Burlington, and the Community High School in Barre, partner with congregations for space for graduation and for small graduation gifts as those programs schedule their graduation exercises.

One congregation in the Barre District helped to outfit a student's college dorm room as the student began a college education this past fall.

In these ways, faith communities are supporting Vermont's youth who are striving to finish their high school education, and, often, to pursue post-secondary education, essential for making a living in today's world.

If you are in need of some extra help with your foster child's expenses, check with your child's social worker to see if PINS might be able to help.

And if you are a member of a faith community that is not yet partnered with PINS, please feel free to help us make that connection! PINS have a website with basic information and links to the latest newsletter: www.dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/pins . Or I can be reached at my home office, 802 454-8304, or PINS@ahs.state.vt.us.

Cordially,

Rebecca Strader
Vermont State Coordinator, PINS (Partners in Service)



Eligibility for College Financial Aid

Youth exiting foster care in Vermont are eligible for financial aid to attend post-secondary education and training through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) based on their status as youth in foster care and their income. The purpose of this summary is to identify the two federal laws effecting eligibility for aid and to clarify how each works.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Act Education and Training Vouchers

In 1999, the federal government enacted the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act which includes the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program. This program provides funds to supplement financial aid for youth in foster care to attend post-secondary education and training. The State of Vermont receives approximately \$121,000 a year for the program. All available Chafee ETV funds are paid out annually by VSAC as part of a youth's overall financial aid package.

Eligibility:

- Youth who were formally in foster care and are between the ages of 18 and 21
- Youth in foster care
- Youth who were in foster care, and were adopted at age 16 or older
- Students participating in the program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of their program may continue to receive support up to age 23

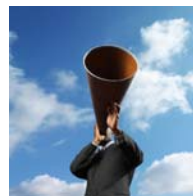
Fostering Adoption to Further Student Achievement Act

The Fostering Adoption to Further Student Achievement Act became law as part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84). This law includes a revised definition of an "independent student". The revised definition of "independent student" will extend to youth who were in foster care on or after their 13th birthday even if they have subsequently been adopted.

This law significantly expands the eligibility for financial assistance for students who have been adopted from the foster care system at age 13 or older. **It does not, however, alter the eligibility for Chafee Funds.**

The Vermont Student Assistance Corporation has a great deal of information on their web site <https://www.vsac.org>.

10 East Allen Street
Winooski, VT 05404-2209
(802) 655-9602



Announcements

The VFAFA scholarship fund has been transitioned to the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). For information, and an application, please contact VSAC at <https://vsac.org> or call **888-253-4819** or **802-654-3798**. The office hours are 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Monday–Friday.



VFAFA VOICE

103 S. Main Street, Osgood 3
Waterbury, VT 05671-2401

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Join Others To Make A Difference in the lives of children and families who care for them.
Complete the membership form and return to My-Lanh Graves, 103 S. Main Street, Osgood 3,
Waterbury, VT 05671-2401. Make checks payable to VFAFA. Dues and donations are tax
deductible. Membership expires March 31, 2010.

Name: _____ District/Program: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Please check: ☐ DCF/FS Licensed Foster Parent ☐ Private Agency Foster Parent
☐ Adoptive Parent ☐ Agency Staff ☐ Community Friend

☐ \$20 Family/Individual Membership ☐ \$_____ Children's Activity Fund Donation

☐ \$_____ Scholarship Fund Donation ☐ \$_____ Please Use My Donation As Needed

☐ I would like to help with:

☐ Newsletter

☐ Legislative Advocacy

☐ Conference Planning

☐ Fundraising

☐ Public Relations

☐ Peer Support

☐ Corporate Sponsorship

☐ Regional Meetings

☐ Other:

☐ Sorry, I have no extra time